DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 332 948 SO 030 228

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TITLE The Young Diplomats Program 1983-84/1988-89. OREA Report.
INSTITUTION New York City Board of Education, Brooklyn, NY. Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment.
PUB DATE Jul 90
NOTE 65p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Career Choice; Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; High Schools; Instructional Materials; *International Educational Exchange; Interviews; *Participant Satisfaction; Program Effectiveness; *Program Evaluation; Questionnaires; Social Studies; Surveys

ABSTRACT

The Young Diplomats Program (Y.D.P.) is an international exchange program between the New York City Public School System and several foreign countries. Students in grades K through 12, but largely in grades 8 through 12, participate in student exchanges or pen-pal programs. This publication describes the program and examines the organization and the types of pre- and post-exchange activities involved, and provides a career profile of the participants, their perceptions of their effectiveness; and their perceptions of the impact of the program. A total of 545 students who had participated in the program were surveyed, and of these 211 responded. In regard to the characteristics of the participants, it was found that they were professionally oriented, collegebound, self-directed individuals. They reported that the exchange program affected them in positive and life-lasting ways, influencing important aspects of their decision-making about college and occupational futures. Most participants felt more confident in themselves, more knowledgeable about international concerns, and more culturally sensitive as a result of their experience. (NL)

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OREA Report

THE YOUNG DIPLOMATS PROGRAM
1983-84/1988-89

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July, 1990

THE YOUNG DIPLOMATS PROGRAM
1983-84/1988-89

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7/3/90

EVALUATION SUMMARY

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Young Diplomats Program (Y.D.P.), administered by the Office of External Programs under the direction of the Deputy Chancellor for External Programs and Community Affairs, is an international exchange program between the New York City Board of Education and several foreign countries. In August 1989, the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) surveyed 515 former Y.D.P. participants, interviewed the Y.D.P. Project Director and observed orientation seminars, in order to describe the Y.D.P. and assess its impact.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

OREA designed this study to examine a range of issues relating to the operations of the Y.D.P. exchanges and the effects of these experiences on the participants. The topics covered included program organization, with a focus on the component parts of the international exchange experiences; an educational and career profile of the participants; the types of pre- and post-exchange activities that participants avail themselves of and their perceptions of their effectiveness; and the participants' perceptions of the impact of the Y.D.P. experiences on their knowledge base and continued interest in international matters, educational and occupational decisions and outcomes, and personal development.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OREA evaluators found that from 1983-1989, a total of 545 students participated in the Y.D.P. Of those, 211 former participants responded to the OREA survey. They represented all five New York City boroughs with a majority coming from Queens, Staten Island, and Manhattan. These students were a part of 30 travel exchanges and 27 hosting exchanges, complemented by foreign counterparts from approximately 10 countries. The exchanges consist of school attendance, historical sightseeing, participation in official receptions and at cultural events, and a taste of everyday life activities through residence with foreign families.

The typical Y.D.P. participant is reported to be a self-directed, college-bound, professionally oriented individual. While the selection process has been purposefully designed to screen for academically motivated and active students, concern has been raised about whether a broad enough base of eligible students are being reached during the recruitment phase.

OREA found that the Y.D.P. participants are provided with and utilize well, a multiplicity of resources to get themselves ready for the international exchanges. Overall, the same could not be said of the post-exchange activities. Follow-up

activities are not planned centrally through the Y.D.P. office. Arranged and implemented in the respective schools of the participants, inconsistencies were reported in the types and frequencies of these activities.

The great majority of former Y.D.P. participants reported that the exchange program affected them in positive and often life-lasting ways. A substantial portion of the participants felt that the Y.D.P. experience influenced some important aspect of decision-making about college and broadened their perspectives of their occupational futures. Additionally, the data suggest that most participants felt more confident in themselves, and more knowledgeable about international matters, and became more culturally sensitive as a result of the international exchange experience.

Based on the results of this survey, OREA offers the following recommendations:

- The selection procedures should be examined and reevaluated in order to create strategies for opening up recruitment to a broader base of eligible students.

- The follow-up component and post-exchange activities of the Y.D.P. experiences should be fully reassessed in order to strengthen their effectiveness and to insure more consistency in their implementation from school to school.

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I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAM

The Young Diplomats Program (Y.D.P.), administered by the Office of External Programs, is an international exchange program between the New York City Public School System and several foreign countries. Students in grades K through 12, but mainly in grades 8 through 12, participate in student exchanges or pen-pal programs.* The international exchanges feature opportunities for the Y.D.P. participants to both travel abroad and to serve as hosts to foreign students in New York City.

While student exchanges have taken place since 1977 (Israel) and 1980 (Japan) the Y.D.P. had its formal beginning in September, 1983. The countries involved in the exchanges have expanded over time to also include Egypt, West Germany, England, Soviet Union, Spain, France, Austria, Hungary, Italy, and China. Additionally, there have been exchanges with Third World nations in Africa, South America, the Far East and the Caribbean, jointly administered through the Peace Corps Awareness Program and the Y.D.P.

In 1982, the Williamsburg Economic Summit Conference convened with heads of state representing many different countries worldwide. At that time, a set of initiatives was formulated, promoting pre-university international exchange

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*Since 1983, the efforts of the pen-pal component of the Y.D.P. have been to channel requests from foreign students for U.S. pen-pals out to the children in the schools. The requests are usually sent to various Board of Education offices and are then forwarded to students in a range of schools. This evaluation does not cover the pen-pal component of the Y.D.P.

opportunities for students. Consistent with the "President's International Youth Exchange Initiative" generated from this conference, and in compliance with the objectives of the "Regents Action Plan"* of the New York State Education Department, the Y.D.P. aims to devise and carry out programs that advance cultural understanding among students and increase interest in foreign language training.

The cooperation and support of several organizations has been instrumental in setting up and negotiating continued international exchanges for program participants. In each country where there is an exchange, the Y.D.P. administrators have developed working relationships with counterpart educational and governmental officials to shape and implement educationally rewarding activities and events for the students. In addition, the Y.D.P. has formed alliances with public and private agencies in New York City to promote this end of the exchange. For example, the student exchange with Japan has been sustained by the collaborative efforts of the Office of the Mayor, the New York City Board of Education, the N.Y.C. Asia Society, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, and the America-Israel Friendship League. Similar organizational linkages exist to support student exchanges with all of the other countries involved with the Y.D.P. as well.

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*The "Regents Action Plan" of the New York State Education Department calls for an increase in foreign language instruction and activities that encourage cultural understanding among students.

The premise of the Y.D.P. is that students' in-school educational experiences could be strengthened and nurtured through well-organized, educationally sound, two-way exchange programs. Person-to-person contact between people of diverse backgrounds worldwide is seen as key to understanding the complex and interrelated nature of the modern world as well as to cultivating good citizenship skills. By providing opportunities to form international contacts in both the academic and personal areas, the Y.D.P. hopes to aid students in making future academic and career choices and in enriching the processes of maturation.

The Y.D.P. is supported almost exclusively by tax-levy funds, with occasional in-kind donations made by private sector parties. The total budget has expanded from under $100,000 in 1983 to almost $150,000 during the 1989-90 fiscal year. All major expenses for the participants' exchange experiences are paid for by the Y.D.P. The present estimated cost per student per trip is $1,200 with variation depending on the country visited. Host families, during the visit of foreign students, also expend money towards family activities.

PROGRAM GOALS

Program goals include helping students acquire first-hand knowledge of the world community and a global perspective on international affairs. In addition, program administrators hope that students will develop a deeper appreciation of their own culture while learning about another, and that they will develop a confidence which may be transferred to positive school

attitudes and performance.

While the Y.D.P. objectives were not formally defined in quantifiable terms, program administrators were most interested in specific areas of the program impact. These relate to whether the students' knowledge of the United States and of their host country increased; whether the participants developed thoughts of career exploration; whether students exhibit positive attitudes toward inhabitants of their host country; and whether students exhibit understanding of the culture of their host country.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

In 1989 the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) conducted an evaluation of the Y.D.P., collecting data from the student participants through mailed surveys. Additional data were obtained through in-depth interviews with the program administrator, and observations of orientation seminars. Questionnaires were mailed to 515 students representing those who had participated in the Y.D.P. from the 1983-84 through the 1988-1989 school years.* Due to the unavailability of files from 1981 to 1983 these programs were not included in the evaluation.

Program administrators identified a core set of questions to use as a guide for the survey construction. Some of these

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*The Y.D.P. exchanges to Italy and through the Peace Corps Awareness Program were not included in this evaluation. The one-time exchange with Italy for Special Education students was exceptional in its design and target population and was therefore not amenable to the same evaluation criteria as was the case for the other exchanges. The students who participated in the one-time joint exchange with the Peace Corps Awareness Program were not included in the evaluation due to the unavailability of the list of participants.

concerned immediate issues and others probed at longer term effects of the program. Consequently, some questions were relevant to either recent participants or older participants, while others related to all participants regardless of when they were involved in the Y.D.P. exchanges. It was for this reason that two formats of the survey were created and sent.

One form of the survey was for the students who had participated in the 1988-89 school year. This form was mailed to 99 students. The other survey was a follow-up for students who had participated in the Y.D.P. at any time from the 1983-84 through the 1987-88 school years. The follow-up form of the survey was sent to 416 students.

Collection of student data focused primarily on students' perceptions of the degree to which the travel and hosting exchange experiences affected their knowledge of the world community, college and career decisions and choices, and personal growth. By categorizing participants (into two groups), OREA explored the short term and longer range impact of the Y.D.P. on students. Those students who had recent involvement with the Y.D.P. were expected to be better able to comment on specific Y.D.P. orientation and follow-up activities as well as to have fresher impressions of the travel and hosting experiences than the previous participants. In contrast, the previous participants were thought to be in better positions to provide data about actual outcomes with respect to program impact, in addition to being able to comment on the impact of the Y.D.P.

exchanges on longer term areas of learning, life decisions, and personal development.

In addition, the evaluation addressed other concerns that interested program planners. The latter included determining the percentage of students who have or plan to maintain contact with their foreign student hosts; the percentage who have taken post-secondary courses related to the literature, language, politics or history of their host country; the percentage who have made college major or career choices in international relations, global history or something else related to the exchange experience; and those who were or expected to be enrolled in a four-year or a two-year college program.

Interviews with the program administrator supplemented the scope of the evaluation with other salient aspects of the program organization such as the selection procedures and staffing. Data obtained from observations of orientation sessions were intended to provide descriptive accounts of exchange preparations activities.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

This report examines certain demographic features, ambitions, and outcomes of Y.D.P. participants, and reviews some of their perceptions of the program. Chapter II of this report describes the program organization with a focus on the component parts of the international exchange experiences. Chapter III offers a profile of the students who have been involved in Y.D.P. international exchanges, with attention to their educational and

career interests and direction. Chapter IV depicts the participants' entry to the Y.D.P. and preparations prior to the exchanges. Chapter V gives a composite picture of what actually takes place during the course of the Y.D.P. hosting and travel exchanges. Chapter VI discusses the forms of activity and involvements participants engage in after the exchange experience. Chapter VII presents the program findings with respect to participants' initial learning and sustained interest in topics of international scope, and to their perceptions of the impact of the exchange experiences on personal development and on educational and career interests and decisions. This section includes a comparison of program objectives with evaluation findings. Chapter VIII offers concluding remarks and recommendations.

II. PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

EXCHANGE COMPONENTS

The Y.D.P. is designed to provide both a hosting and a travel experience for each participant. In most instances, the plan of the Y.D.P. is to have a reciprocal exchange--that is that the New York City student will visit and be visited by the same foreign student. Homestays* and school attendance in the host country in addition to cultural site visits are integral aspects of all exchange experiences.

The list of countries that have been a part of the Y.D.P. exchanges has grown since the start of the program, as has the number of students that have had the opportunity to participate. Table 1 specifies the countries, the number of years each country has been a component part of the Y.D.P., the number of New York City students who have traveled to each country, and the number of New York City students who have hosted students from each country.

Five of the countries in Table 1 have been involved with the Y.D.P. continuously and have arranged annual student exchanges. These countries are Israel, Japan, West Germany, Spain, and Egypt. Since the year that each of these countries became a component of the Y.D.P., both travel and hosting experiences with

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*"Homestay" is the term used for the constellation of experiences the students are expected to have while living with a foreign family. These include eating meals together, sharing in discussions about the respective cultures and institutions, visiting around the community and school with the foreign peer, and becoming familiarized with the everyday life of the foreign people.

Table 1

Number Of New York City Students[a]
Involved In Y.D.P. Exchanges By Country

Country	# Years in Y.D.P. Exchange Program	# Students Traveled	# Students Hosted
Israel	5	60	75
Japan	5	118	118
West Germany	5	88	127
England	1	22	0
Spain	4	100	100
France	1	15	15
Italy	1	15	0
Peace Corps Countries[b]	1	14	0
Egypt	2	19	19
Austria	1	20	20
China	1	14	0

[a] Most but not all of the students who traveled in a foreign exchange are the same students who hosted students from the foreign countries they visited.

[b] The Peace Corps Countries consist of Third World nations in Africa, South America, the Far East and the Caribbean.

- Exchanges with Israel, Japan, West Germany, and Spain have been a part of the Y.D.P. longer than all the other Y.D.P. affiliated countries (four or more years), and more New York City Board of Education students have traveled to and have been visited by students from Israel, Japan, West Germany, and Spain than the other countries involved with the Y.D.P.

students from those countries have taken place. The specific elements of the program plan and execution are very similar for these countries.

Along with the homestay, school attendance, and historical and cultural sightseeing excursions, the exchanges with Israel, Japan, West Germany, Spain, and Egypt have also provided the contexts for student delegates to act as representatives of their homelands. These situations have included official invitations to formal receptions in embassies or the homes of diplomats, to school and community group forums in order to make presentations about the educational, social, and cultural activities in the home city or country, and to special civic events and celebrations.

Exchanges with the other countries in Table 1 (England, Italy, the Peace Corps Countries, Austria, and China) were more limited in terms of the number of years they were connected to the Y.D.P. Moveover, the exchange programs with these countries differed in terms of the special target populations they served and in the other unique features each offered.

Among those distinctive exchanges were two travel programs for junior high school students. The Grade 8-Gates Extension*

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*The Gates Extension Program was developed as part of the Promotional Policy Program for seventh-grade Gates students who were unable to meet the promotional criterion at the end of the school year. Fourth-grade and seventh-grade students who had been eligible for Gates placement in 1983-84 and who failed to attain the reading criterion in April, 1984 were eligible for placement in the 1984-85 fifth-and eighth-grade Extension programs, respectively.

exchange to England was a one-time summer camp experience in 1984. Another exchange for eighth grade students was with Tokyo, Japan in the 1987-88 and 1988-89 academic years. While the exchange with Tokyo included a reciprocal hosting experience in New York City with visits from Japanese students, the program with England did not contain a hosting experience in the United States.

The program in Italy was an exchange for mentally retarded teenagers of New York City and Milan. As this exchange did not involve homestays in either country, students were lodged in hotels and dormitories. This component was associated with the Y.D.P. in the academic year 1985-86 only and has since been overseen by other Board of Education offices.

The Peace Corps Awareness Exchange involved 14 students visiting 7 countries (2 students per country) with a teacher chaperon and Peace Corps volunteer accompanying them in each country. This exchange was affiliated with the Y.D.P. only in the 1985-86 school year. Under the administration of other Board of Education offices, the Peace Corps Exchange continues.

The student exchange in Vienna, Austria in 1987 was unique in its financial backing by the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, under whose auspices, this trip has since been administered and funded. It was a semester-long program and was geared toward students with demonstrated performing and fine arts interests.

Most recent of the special Y.D.P. exchanges was a travel opportunity for a New York City delegation of students to visit

Beijing, China in Spring, 1989. This was prior to the student demonstrations and government repressions in that country. The reciprocal exchange has not yet been arranged for the Chinese students to visit New York City.

From the 1983-1984 school year through the 1988-1989 school year there were altogether 30 travel exchanges, where New York City students visited other countries, and 27 hosting exchanges, where New York City students served as hosts to foreign students. There were a total of 545 New York City Board of Education students served in these exchange experiences.

SELECTION PROCEDURES

The program administrator believes that the success of each exchange experience depends, to a significant extent, on the ability of the schools and of the Y.D.P. selection committees to choose suitable participants. This is largely due to the nature of the program, which requires that the students be mature enough to handle being away from their homes, responsibly care for foreign students who visit, and get along in a group situation. These criteria exceed the customary expectations that prospective students demonstrate ability to benefit academically from the exchange experiences. Given the weight placed on finding students who will make a good fit in the exchanges, the Y.D.P. has devised a multi-step selection process.

The choice of schools from which students are ultimately selected is based on the school's academic programs and their relationship to the focus of the exchange. Typically the school

must offer courses or have special programs in the foreign language or culture of the country involved in the exchange. For example, the Japanese program requires the school to have classes in Japanese culture and language. While this criteria holds true for most exchanges, it does not apply for the Israel program. Schools for this exchange are considered if they have a balanced multi-ethnic composition of students and a desire on the part of the principal to offer such experiences to the student body. The Y.D.P. participants surveyed who attended high school in 1988-1989 came from 39 high schools each school being represented by an average of one to three students.

Once the schools that are to become part of the exchange are defined, the identification and selection processes for student participants begins. Publicity to recruit students for Y.D.P. exchanges is carried out through specified channels within the schools, according to the program administrator. Methods of recruiting potential participants include exposure to presentations by former Young Diplomats in foreign language and culture classes, special bulletins about the exchanges from the principal, Y.D.P. school coordinator, and student government leaders, and word of mouth by friends, family, teachers and other school personnel.

According to the Young Diplomats Program Comprehensive Plan Report 1987-88, each participating school identifies student candidates who:

- represent all ethnic and economic backgrounds;

- have done or are doing course work in related fields;
- would benefit academically and socially from the exchange experience;
- can articulate ideas effectively;
- are contributing members of the school community (involved in extra curricular and community activities);
- have good academic standing so that absence from school will not adversely affect their scholastic standing;
- have home atmospheres that are conducive to a positive hosting experience. In some instances, surrogate hosts are used. This enables students who are unable to host, to have the opportunity to participate in the return visit to the partner country.

The schools base their selection of student candidates on school records, teacher recommendations, parent conferences, and home visits by a school staff member who serves as the Y.D.P. coordinator in that school.

Visits are made to the student's home to ascertain whether the home situation lends itself to welcoming a foreign visitor on the New York City end of the exchange. Observations are made of the relationships between family members, parent-child interactions, and the physical set up of the home in order to assess the family's ability to provide a comfortable, safe homestay experience for the foreign guest.

After initial screening, the school coordinator recommends candidates to a selection committee at the central Board of Education. This panel is usually composed of three to five impartial members representing various offices. This committee makes the final decisions about Y.D.P. participants based on essays the students have written, reports from the school

coordinator's home visits, and the personal interviews held with all students.

Each phase of the selection process is intended to identify students who have a demonstrated interest in an area related to the partner country through their class work or extra-curricular involvements, and who are spirited, articulate, personable, and able to conduct themselves responsibly on a travel experience. The program administrator estimated that two times the amount of students who are actually accepted to the Y.D.P. exchanges are interviewed for these opportunities.

Some of the former Y.D.P. participants surveyed, as well as the program administrator, raised similar concerns about the selection guidelines and procedures. They represented a mixture of views on questions such as whether or not different strategies should be used to reach a broader base of eligible Y.D.P. recruits; whether the selection criteria are appropriate and well devised or whether they are too restrictive and exclusive; and whether or not participants should be given the opportunity to be a part of more than one travel-hosting exchange. Though these concerns persist and perhaps cannot be fully resolved, the program administrator believes that on the whole, the selection process is sound. The program administrator has been satisfied with how the selection procedures have functioned thus far in screening for participants who make a good fit to the needs of the program.

STAFFING

The Y.D.P. staff consists of the Project Director and Assistant Director, with the support services of a full time secretary. The duties and responsibilities of the Project Director are broadly conceived. They include all facets of program development and implementation, monitoring and supervision of all international exchange activities, establishing and maintaining contacts with local and foreign organizations, selection of student participants and adult chaperons, and program assessment. In addition to the wide range of administrative functions, the Project Director makes direct contributions to many of the pre- and post-exchange activities and is an escort on many of the travel exchanges. The current Project Director has been with the Y.D.P. in the capacity of program administrator since its inception. The Assistant Director acts as an associate in an exhaustive list of duties and responsibilities reported to be nearly identical to that of the Project Director. The Assistant Director position was created two years ago.

As has been mentioned, each high school engaged in student exchanges has a Y.D.P. coordinator in the school. Typically this is a department head, coordinator of Student Activities, teacher of foreign language or world cultures, or someone who has a special regard for or affiliation to the foreign language or country. The school coordinators are pivotal in relaying information to prospective Y.D.P. candidates about upcoming exchanges or activities, identifying, visiting the homes, and

selecting the first round of student candidates, and planning and overseeing the in-school schedules for foreign students who will visit and attend the school.

Cooperation at the school level, in general, is seen as key to supporting and encouraging the Y.D.P. participants, to receiving the foreign guests amicably, and to implementing follow-up activities, once the students return from the exchanges. This cooperation, it was reported, has not been consistently attained. When necessary, the Y.D.P. school coordinators have been called on to assist the Y.D.P. participants in negotiating within the school (ie., with teachers over school absence and make-up work) and to intervene over the assignment of independent study credit for travel projects. Additionally the Y.D.P. school coordinators have been needed to work out the arrangements for the Y.D.P. participants so that they can make presentations or otherwise share their foreign exchange experiences with classmates. The position of the Y.D.P. school coordinator is a voluntary one.

Adult chaperons who accompany the students on the travel exchanges are selected by the Project Director from a pool of Y.D.P. school coordinators and central New York City Board of Education administrators. They function as trip leaders and are responsible for carrying out Y.D.P. plans in as effective and safe a manner possible. There are usually two adult chaperons per exchange.

III. STUDENT PROFILE

OREA asked both groups of students (Y.D.P. 1988-89 participants and the pre-1988-89 participants) similar background questions to get a general picture of where they came from, what types of students they were, what initially made them interested in participating in the Y.D.P., and what types of educational and work ambitions they had.

Of the Y.D.P. 1988-89 participants and pre-1988-89 participants who responded to the OREA survey*, there were 1.5 times more female than male students. All of the 1988-89 participants (100 percent) attended high school during the 1988-89 school year, while 29 percent of the previous participants were still in high school during the 1988-89 school year. While students from both groups represented schools in all five New York City boroughs, 75 percent came equally from Queens, Staten Island, and Manhattan and the remaining 25 percent of the participants came from the Bronx and Brooklyn.

The majority of students from both groups originally learned about the Y.D.P. from teachers (89 percent) and were drawn to the Y.D.P. because of the international experiences it offered. The reasons cited most often for becoming involved with the Y.D.P. were to have opportunities to meet students from foreign countries (above 90 percent for both student groups), to travel

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*Of the 515 students that the OREA questionnaire was mailed to, a total of 211 students (41 percent) responded. The return rate amongst Y.D.P. participants was 53 percent (N=52). For the previous participants, the return rate was 38 percent (N=159).

(between 80 and 90 percent for both groups), and to learn more about a foreign country (77 percent for 1988-89 participants, 84 percent for pre-1988-89 participants). Fewer students claimed that their initial interest in the Y.D.P. was to practice the foreign language they were studying in school (around 45 percent in both groups).

The majority of Y.D.P. participants identified themselves as either college bound, already attending college, or in some cases, college graduates. Amongst the pre-1988-89 participants, most (86 percent) indicated that as of September, 1989, they had planned to either be starting or continuing in a four-year college program. The rest (14 percent) were either involved in another type of post-secondary educational pursuit (junior or community college, technical or trade institutes, professional schools) or had completed college.

A similar picture emerged for the 1988-89 Y.D.P. participants who principally also define themselves as a college directed group of students. The post-secondary plans of 96 percent of the 1988-89 Y.D.P. participants include attendance at a four-year college. The remaining students hope to attend junior or community colleges or technical schools.

The college majors that 82 percent of all of the Y.D.P. participants plan to undertake are ones which are linked to professional careers. In terms of career intentions, at this point, the great majority (89 percent) of the pre-1988-89 participants aspire to be professionals in occupations requiring

higher education. (The career interests of the 1988-89 Y.D.P. participants and the pre-1988-89 Y.D.P. participants will be presented and discussed in more detail in Chapter VII.)

Broadly speaking, the Y.D.P. participants in the sample can be characterized as a highly motivated group of students, who were able to articulate their areas of interest, who value opportunities to become well-rounded and globally aware individuals, who generally seem to have plans for their futures, and whose post high-school trajectories include higher education and professional careers.

IV. BEFORE THE EXCHANGE

According to the program administrator, Y.D.P. participants undergo a multiplicity of experiences pertaining to the hosting and travel exchanges during the "exchange" year. In order to prepare for the hosting and travel exchanges, the Y.D.P. offers orientation seminars and educationally relevant cultural events, as well as research and writing activities to serve as groundwork for the exchange experiences. Participants are required to partake in all pre-exchange activities. While there is certainly overlap, each program component in the preparatory phase has a distinctive dimension.

The orientation seminars are intended to provide students with substantive information about the partner country (covering such topics as history, culture, political structure, geography, people, customs, foods and language), spell out the Y.D.P. rules and expectations of the students, outline the itineraries of the exchanges, and generate group cohesiveness and enthusiasm among participants. Moreover, parents are requested to attend these sessions so as to engage family cooperation and involvement, understood to be essential, especially to the hosting experience in New York City.

The Y.D.P. has several on-going relationships with international friendship organizations in New York City which have taken part in the orientation sessions. The extent of their participation has included arranging the orientation program, inviting local diplomats or experts to speak, and providing

written materials on the partner country. The format of the orientation sessions varies by country and by whether it precedes a travel or hosting experience.

Most of the 1988-89 Y.D.P. participants found the orientation sessions prior to the travel very informative (82 percent), while the orientation sessions prior to the hosting were found to be somewhat (33 percent) to very informative (50 percent). The features of the orientation meetings which were reported to be helpful to most students were the travel tips and advice (90 percent) and the opportunity to meet the other New York City students in the exchange group (89 percent). Over half of the students believed that other aspects of the orientation seminars were helpful, such as the chance to meet the chaperons (71 percent), presentations about the culture of the partner country (65 percent), information regarding Y.D.P. requirements (62 percent), and hints on hospitality (58 percent). Additionally, a few students reported being reassured by coverage of the topic of personal safety in the orientation seminars.

Aside from the programmed orientation activities, Y.D.P. participants were urged to seek out resources on their own to supplement their learning about the partner country. Many of the 1988-89 participants did so by speaking with teachers or Y.D.P. school coordinators (62 percent), reading books and magazines (60 percent), and making contact with former Young Diplomats in their schools (58 percent).

To encourage a broad base of reading, research projects on

topics that were of special interest with respect to the partner country were to be completed by Y.D.P. participants before the exchange. The projects are submitted to the Y.D.P. Project Director prior to the exchange departure. Additionally, the projects may be submitted to the home school for application as independent study projects or toward course credit.

Students were also required to make journal entries in a log before the exchange. They are then expected to write something in their logs each day of the exchange. This writing exercise is intended to motivate the Y.D.P. participants to reflect on the exchange experiences and to practice relating to the experiences in this personalized manner.

Many Y.D.P. participants have held on to their logs and their research reports to serve as reminders of the exchanges. Of the 1988-89 participants, 79 percent still have their logs and 54 percent still have their research reports. Of the participants prior to 1988-89, 65 percent continue to have their logs, while 30 percent have retained their research reports.

V. EXCHANGE ITINERARY - A COMPOSITE VIEW

HOSTING

With rare exceptions, all hosting experiences, entailing visits from foreign students to Y.D.P. students in New York City, are arranged for two to three weeks. Within that timeframe five major types of activities are programmed by the Y.D.P. and are fixtures of all hosting exchanges. These fall into the following categories: school experiences, official receptions, historical sightseeing, cultural events, and homestays.

Foreign students have the opportunity to attend school with their Y.D.P. counterparts from three to five days during the exchange. Typically there is an emphasis on having the experience be of a routine school day. This is so the foreign students can get the flavor of the course of the regular school day. The Y.D.P. school coordinator prepares a schedule for the foreign guest, including attendance of classes selected on the basis of his or her interests, and visits to global studies classes to make short presentations. The Y.D.P. host acts as an ambassador in the home school, insuring that the foreign guest is introduced to the faculty and students appropriately and feels welcomed.

In each hosting exchange there are usually some types of ceremonies, receptions, or at times less formal gatherings held with public officials to greet or address the foreign students and New York City Y.D.P. participants. These have included meetings with officials from the New York City Board of

Education, the New York City Mayor's Office, Embassy diplomats, and special envoys to the U.S. from the home country of the foreign students.

Sightseeing is scheduled for approximately seven to ten days of each exchange. Day trips to Bear Mountain State Park, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and Lancaster, Pennsylvania (Amish community), have regularly appeared in the Y.D.P. hosting itineraries, as well as days of exhaustive touring within and around (by boat) New York City. Additionally, intensive weekend sightseeing excursions are typically planned for Washington D.C., and Williamsburg, Virginia.

Participation in a few cultural events is programmed by the Y.D.P. and has included activities such as seeing Broadway shows, and films, going to baseball games, and walking on Fifth Avenue.

Clearly the homestays, viewed as crucial to the exchange experiences, are not and cannot be programmed with the same style of organization as are other activities. The program administrator of Y.D.P. does recommend that the family try to provide the foreign guest with opportunities to see and sample the everyday life activities of the family. These involve eating meals together, holding family discussions, going shopping, riding public transportation, meeting friends and relatives of the family, and so on.

TRAVEL

Generally the kinds of experiences that the New York City Y.D.P. participants have while abroad are the same as those that

foreign students have when they are in New York City. All exchanges in foreign countries involve some portion of school attendance, meetings with officials, sightseeing, cultural activities, and homestays with families and students native to the country being visited.

As an example of a schedule for a travel exchange, the program in Israel has involved a few days of school attendance, a courtesy call at the American Embassy; receptions with public figures at Tel Aviv University, a multitude of touring including trips to Masada, the Dead Sea, and Jerusalem; going to museums, lectures, and concerts, and relaxation time with host families.

On the whole, the Y.D.P. program administrator believes that the schedule and sequence of the travel and hosting activities provides a good balance of academic, cultural, and social experiences for the participants to enjoy and learn from. While the pace of the exchanges is necessarily quick, several of the former Y.D.P. participants surveyed did express frustration over the length of the exchanges, believing that the two week time limit was too short.

VI. AFTER THE EXCHANGE

SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES

Upon completion of the exchanges, follow-up activities are planned by the school and the Y.D.P. Project Director so that the Y.D.P. participants can report on their travel and hosting experiences to schoolmates and community members. The program administrator believes it is valuable for the Y.D.P. participants to bring back stories, perceptions, and information to the home school and to act as school resources by sharing these ideas with others. The bulk of these activities are arranged and carried out at the school level, and have included participating in class discussions, seminars, lectures, and interviews.

The post-exchange forums are also regarded as important in terms of how they promote Y.D.P. outreach efforts and visibility. The talks that the Y.D.P. participants give to school peers are intended to serve as part of the school's recruitment process for subsequent exchanges. They are also geared toward motivating students in the high schools to register for related subjects. Further, Y.D.P. participants have been invited, at times, to speak to community members about their Y.D.P. experiences at functions organized by the schools. These presentations have been aimed at identifying potential donors.*

More students indicated that they were involved in post-

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*While all major travel expenses are covered by the N.Y.C. Board of Education, there have been occasions when the P.T.A., local officials or private citizens have donated stipends to supplement spending allowances for less advantaged Y.D.P. participants.

exchange activities following the travel experience than after their hosting experience. Seventy-five percent of 1988-89 Y.D.P. participants indicated that they made presentations to a school assembly, club, or class after the travel component of the exchange, while only one third (35 percent) did so after the hosting experience. Twenty-three percent of the 1988-89 Y.D.P. participants indicated that they had either been interviewed or involved in public ceremonies after traveling with the Y.D.P. and fewer did so (15 percent) after the hosting experience. Other post-exchange activities at the school which were noted by the Y.D.P. participants included writing articles for school newspapers, and sharing letters from friends made abroad.

OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL

Distinct from the school-based efforts to coordinate follow-up activities after the exchanges, many Y.D.P. participants have followed up on their own through more personalized and individualized efforts. While many have preserved and shared more intimate reminders from the exchanges, it has also been very common for Y.D.P. participants to continue contact with friends made during the exchanges.

Table 2 displays the types of reminders the Y.D.P. participants indicated that they have from the exchanges. These are divided into two main areas: keepsakes (concrete artifacts related to the exchange), and personal contacts.

Almost all students indicated that they still have photo albums from the exchanges. The majority of participants also

Table 2

Reminders of the Exchanges

Reminder Type	1988-89 Y.D.P. Participants	Pre-1988-89 Y.D.P. Participants
Keepsakes		
Photo album	100%	94%
Gifts (foreign students)	100	91
Souvenirs	96	86
Maps	83	70
Personal Contacts		
Letters to you	96	87
Letters from you	96	85
Phone calls from you	39	39
Phone calls to you	39	31
Visits to you	8	25
Visits from you	4	16
Have not had contact but plans to contact	6	5
Have not had contact and does not plan to contact	4	11

- Y.D.P. participants from both groups (1988-89 and pre-1988-89 participants) most frequently saved photo albums, followed by gifts from foreign students, thirdly, souvenirs and lastly, maps.

- Y.D.P. participants from both groups (1988-89 and pre-1988-89 participants) most frequently maintained contact with their Y.D.P. foreign partners through letter writing, followed by phone calling and lastly through visits to each other.

indicated that they had held onto gifts given to them by their foreign counterparts, while some indicated that they still possessed memorabilia such as souvenirs and maps. Participants further noted that they had saved a variety of miscellaneous brochures, foreign coins, ticket stubs, posters and the like.

Table 2 also shows that the most popular forms of contact between Y.D.P. participants and their foreign partners have been letter writing, followed by phone communication, and lastly by mutual visits. This appears to be the case irrespective of how long ago a student went on a Y.D.P. exchange. While the rate of letter writing is higher for those who were on exchanges in the 1988-89 school year, the rate of in-person contact through visits is higher for those who were on exchanges before the 1988-89 school year. This is not surprising, given that the further away in time a Y.D.P. participant gets from the actual exchange experience, the more likely it is that he or she will have the chance and resources to travel again. What is striking is that the great majority of Y.D.P. participants have managed to maintain contact with their foreign counterparts and that over time, the importance of keeping up these international friendships seems to remain high.

In order to encourage the preservation of more local friendships made between the New York City participants, the Y.D.P. Project Director expressed an interest in organizing systematic and larger-scale reunions. Though post-exchange contacts amongst the Y.D.P. participants and with the Y.D.P.

office have occurred, according to the Project Director they have tended to be haphazard and have not extended to a broad base of the former participants.

VII. PROGRAM FINDINGS

While the objectives of the Young Diplomats Program were not identified in quantifiable terms, OREA defined variables to assess specific areas of impact on the participants. Program findings will be presented as they relate to the participants' perceptions of:

- how much and what they learned about the country involved in the exchange, and the extent to which they have pursued these interests on their own since the exchange;
- how much and in what ways the Y.D.P. experiences affected their decisions about higher education, and the actual educational outcomes of the participants;
- how much and in what ways the Y.D.P. experiences influenced their choices about careers, and the actual goals they have for themselves occupationally; and
- the ways in which the Y.D.P. experiences contributed to their personal development

A discussion of findings on the above criteria will be followed by a brief account of findings regarding the impact of the Y.D.P. exchanges on the participants' perceptions of friendship.

INITIAL LEARNING AND SUSTAINED INTEREST

OREA was interested in the Y.D.P. participants' perceptions of how much they learned from the exchanges and in what areas. The participants assessed how well they felt they understood the people, culture, and foreign relations of the partner country. Over 90 percent of the Y.D.P. participants indicated that, as a result of the exchange experience, they felt fairly to extremely

well informed* about both the people and the culture of the countries in the exchanges. Participants did not believe, however, that they had made as much progress in the area of foreign relations. While 68 percent of the Y.D.P. participants felt they were fairly to extremely well informed about foreign relations of the exchange country, 31 percent indicated they felt only somewhat or not at all informed on this subject as a result of the exchange experience.

OREA also inquired about the ways in which Y.D.P. participants have pursued their interests and expanded their knowledge on topics related to the Y.D.P. exchanges.

Close to 90 percent of the Y.D.P. participants indicated that they continue to read newspaper articles that relate to the exchange country from sometimes to very often.** Books on the subject, however, were read less often. Still about 40 percent of the Y.D.P. participants reported that they sometimes read books, 40 percent claimed that they rarely do so, and 8 percent acknowledged that they never read books about the exchange country.

Y.D.P. participants also reported that they more often visited museums as a means of increasing their knowledge about the exchange country than they engaged in other similar activities asked about in the survey. Nearly half (49 percent)

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*The response categories were: not at all, slightly, fairly well, extremely well.

**The response categories were: never, rarely, sometimes, very often.

of all participants indicated that they sometimes saw museum exhibits related to the partner country; 12 percent indicated they did this very often. Slightly less than half of the Y.D.P. participants indicated that they sometimes or very often attended arts performances and festivals that referred to the exchange country. The least-frequented events were friendship society meetings and lectures associated with the exchange country. Close to 40 percent of the Y.D.P. participants indicated that they never attended meetings or lectures of this sort. On a more informal level, however, some of the former participants noted that they went to foreign films and restaurants. These experiences were evidently seen as valuable in terms of enriching the participants' learning about the exchange country.

Generally speaking, the aims of the Y.D.P. in the realm of initial learning and sustained interest were realized for the great majority of the former participants. Nearly all of them indicated that they had become more knowledgeable about the exchange country's way of life and its inhabitants. To maintain and enrich that knowledge base, most of the Y.D.P. participants continued to read about the partner country and go on cultural outings that related to the exchange country. While not as outstanding as the advances made in acquiring general knowledge and retaining interest in the partner country, many participants did feel more informed about specific matters of foreign relations, current affairs, and U.S. culture.

EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

OREA asked the Y.D.P. participants about their perceptions of the ways in which the Y.D.P. experiences had influenced their decision-making about higher education. In addition to eliciting information about the participants' impressions on the subject, the Y.D.P. Project Director was interested in knowing about the tangible choices made by the participants in their selections of college major.

(Because the 1988-89 Y.D.P. participants and the Y.D.P. participants from years previous to 1988-89 were, by and large, at different stages of their education [the latter group being further along], some of the results will be presented separately for the two groups.)

For the most part, the responses that the participants offered about the Y.D.P. impact on decisions about education fell into six categories. Table 3 displays the types of these effects and the percentages of participants who reported being affected, by the Y.D.P. experience, in each area.

As Table 3 shows, close to one-third of the students (from both 1988-89 and pre-1988-89 Y.D.P. participant groups) indicated that the Y.D.P. experience had affected their decisions about what they have studied or planned to study in college. For some, this meant that they were motivated to major or minor in a subject related to the exchange experience (ie., foreign language or any internationally related course of study). For others this meant that they were influenced to take courses that would help

Table 3

Impact on Decisions About College

Effect On:	Pre-1988-89 Y.D.P. Participants	1988-89 Y.D.P. Participants
Choice of whether to go to college	5	6
Selection of college	18	31
Decision to study foreign language	20	17
Decision to take other exchange-related courses	11	21
No effect: Decisions about college already made	13	11
No effect	25	10
Other	8	4

- Y.D.P. participants from both groups (1988-89 and pre-1988-89 participants) indicated that the kinds of college decisions which were influenced by their involvement with the Y.D.P. were whether to attend and where to go to college and what to study.
- Y.D.P. participants from both groups (1988-89 and pre-1988-89 participants) most frequently reported that the Y.D.P. experience affected them in terms of what they have or plan to study in college.

them keep up with their interests and expand their knowledge of matters related to the exchange.

Nearly one-fifth (18 percent) of the pre-1988-89 participants and almost one third (31 percent) of the 1988-89 participants indicated that the Y.D.P. experience had influenced their decision about which college to attend and where (location) to go to college. The kinds of concerns about college selection that came up for the participants as a result of having been a part of the Y.D.P. exchanges included: whether to choose schools that offered opportunities to study abroad and/or had special foreign language and culture courses; whether to consider going to a foreign university; and for some, whether to choose a college in the more familiar environment of New York City or seek a new set of experiences in a college outside of this area.

There were only a small fraction of students (close to 6 percent) who felt that the Y.D.P. experience played a role in encouraging them to go to college at all. This was not surprising given that, as was reported earlier, the Y.D.P. participants could, on the whole, be described as an academically motivated group of students with high educational aspirations. In fact, Table 3 shows that 11 to 13 percent of the former participants acknowledged that they had already made decisions about college before the Y.D.P. experience.

However, for those participants who were not already settled on decisions about post-secondary education, the effects of the Y.D.P. experience were striking. The fact that the relatively

brief, yet intensive involvement with the Y.D.P. was credited by the participants with influencing such major life decisions as whether or not to go to college, where to go and what to study, is remarkable. Overall, most of the Y.D.P. participants (over 60 percent) felt that the exchange experience did impact on some aspect of these important educational decisions.

To examine the degree to which the Y.D.P. participants were moved to act on the interests and issues raised from the exchange experiences, OREA asked the participants about actual choices they have made in college. Table 4 shows a breakdown of the college major types* either selected or planned for by Y.D.P. participants.

Table 4 illustrates that, of all of the responses given by the pre-1988-89 Y.D.P. participants about their chosen college majors, the largest share was in international fields (18 percent). The next most frequently cited majors were in the fields of business and computer sciences (14 percent), civics studies (12 percent), and social sciences (12 percent). A similar profile of college majors emerged for the more recent 1988-89 Y.D.P. participants who, at the time of this study, had not yet entered college and whose responses therefore only reflected their plans, not actual choices. Although not unexpected, it should be noted that nearly one-fifth (17 percent) of the 1988-89 Y.D.P. participants reported that they were

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*See Appendix A for a listing of the specific academic and professional fields associated with each college major type.

undecided about college major.

The results in this area show that the intentions of the Y.D.P., to encourage college attendance and to promote interest

Table 4

Planned and Actual College Majors[a] of Y.D.P. Participants

College Major Areas[b]	1988-89 Participants (Planned Major)	Pre-1988-89 Participants (Actual Major)
International Fields	13%	18%
Civics Studies	19	12
Social Sciences	10	12
Health Professions	15	6
Business/Computer Sci.	6	14
Media Studies	10	6
Natural/Physical Sciences	6	6
Arts/Music/Design	2	6
Engineering/Math	2	7
Humanities	0	5
Education	0	4
Other	0	1
Undecided	17	5

[a] Given that each participant could list more than one major subject, the figures in this table represent the percentages of the total number of responses and do not account for the number of students who chose any given college major.

[b] See Appendix A for a listing of the specific academic and professional fields associated with each of these areas.

- Over two-fifths (42 percent) of all former Y.D.P. participants (1988-89 and pre-1988-89 participants) have or plan to major in either an international field, civic studies or social sciences.

- Close to one-fifth of all former Y.D.P. participants (1988-89 and pre-1988-89 participants) have or plan major in either business/computer science or in the health professions.

in pursuing studies that are internationally related, were fulfilled for many of the former participants. Moreover, it is clear from the findings that most former participants believed and demonstrated that the Y.D.P. exchange experience had given direction to some feature of their decision-making about college.

CAREER CHOICES

The Y.D.P. program administrator was further interested in knowing if and how the Y.D.P. exchange experiences influenced the array of choices contemplated and any decisions made about careers for the participants. The participants were asked to relate their perceptions about this and to project into their futures in order to state their career aspirations.

Table 5 delineates the six key areas identified by the participants in their responses to a question about the impact of the Y.D.P. experiences on their career choices. Over one-fourth (27 percent) of the 1988-89 participants and 16 percent of the participants from the prior years indicated that they became interested in careers that are international in scope as a result of having been a part of the Y.D.P.

For some of these students, the decision to pursue international careers was directly attributed to their participation in the Y.D.P. Others indicated that, while they had already been leaning toward careers with an international scope, the Y.D.P experience reinforced these preferences. For others, what was affected was not so much the type of career they aspired to have as their perception of the "market" for

Table 5

Impact on Career Choices

Effect On:	Pre-1988-89 Y.D.P. Participants	1988-89 Y.D.P. Participants
Deciding on a career with an international scope	16	27
Interest to work in foreign countries	7	8
Interest in a career which involves travel	9	14
Interest to continue foreign language studies for work purposes	7	8
General decisions about careers	6	11
No effect	43	23
Other	13	10

- Over one-half of the pre-1988-89 participants and close to three-quarters of the 1988-89 participants indicated that the Y.D.P. had some type of impact on their career choices.
- The effect on career choices most felt by participants (both pre-1988-89 Y.D.P. participants and 1988-89 participants) was on the decision to aim for a career with an international scope.

their occupational interest--now with a worldwide rather than a local focus.

Other salient effects of the Y.D.P. experiences, as shown in Table 5, were on increasing the motivation and interest of participants to pursue work in foreign countries, to strive for careers that entail foreign travel, and to continue studies of foreign language for work purposes.

As was the case with the impact on higher education, a considerable portion of Y.D.P. participants indicated that the program had no effect on their career choices or decisions. In fact, among the pre-1988-89 Y.D.P. participants, 43 percent reported that there was no effect in this area, while the portion was smaller for the 1988-89 participants (27 percent). Again, this may be explained by the fact that, given that the Y.D.P. participants present themselves as a self-directed and motivated group, it is probable that they had made some career decisions before they went on the exchange. It is also likely that the impact from the Y.D.P. cannot be so easily distinguished from other factors and experiences* which are known influence career choices. Nevertheless, at least half of all Y.D.P. participants did credit the Y.D.P. experience for guiding some dimension of their career choice.

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*For example, many the pre-1988-89 Y.D.P. participants in this sample have already been attending college. The academic and social experiences in college certainly guide decisions about careers. For these students, the impact of Y.D.P. exchange on their career choices might well have been diffused and more difficult to ascertain.

To evaluate the extent of the participants' interest in and commitment to international matters as reflected in the important life decisions they made, OREA asked the pre-1988-89 Y.D.P. participants to name their occupational aspirations. Table 6 shows that nearly one-fifth (19 percent) indicated that they would strive toward careers in international fields.* The remainder of career types to which the participants aspired could all be classified as professional, but not necessarily nor expressly related to the Y.D.P. experience.

On the whole, the hope of the Y.D.P. that participants would become more interested in internationally related careers and would take on a global perspective with regard to their future work, was met. A majority of the former participants reported that the Y.D.P. experience had influenced some aspect of their thinking about careers. Many felt exposed to a wider range of career options, now including ones with an international context. Most expressed a desire to incorporate their exchange-related interest (ie., foreign language, travel, etc.) into their future work. Indicative of the possibility for longer range impact, a smaller, yet notable group of former participants reported that they aspired to have internationally based occupations 10 years from the time they completed the survey.

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*See the Appendix for a listing of the specific academic and professional fields and areas associated with each career type.

Table 6

Y.D.P. Pre-1988-89 Participants' Career Aspirations for 10 Years From Now[a]

Occupation or Career Type[b]	Percent of Participants Who Have This Aspiration
International Fields	19%
Business/Computer Sciences	14
Health Professions	13
Arts/Music/Design	11
Civics	9
Social Sciences	5
Engineering/Math	5
Media	5
Education	4
Natural/Physical Sciences	3
Humanities	1
Other	3
Undecided	8

[a] The survey was administered in August-September 1989.

[b] See Appendix A for a listing of the specific academic and professional fields associated with each of these types.

- Close to one-fifth (19 percent) of the pre-1988-89 Y.D.P. participants reported that their long-range hope is to be in internationally related careers.

- Occupational aspirations in the humanities, natural/physical sciences, and education were least popular among the pre-1988-89 Y.D.P. participants.

PERSONAL GROWTH

As exposure to new and different cultures, peoples and lands is well known to make impressions on those who travel, the Y.D.P. administrator was also interested in the less visible and more psycho-social effects of the exchange experiences. OREA asked the Y.D.P. participants about their perceptions of the impact of the exchange experience on their personal development.

Broadly speaking, the areas of personal development that the participants associated with the Y.D.P. exchanges fell into the following categories:

- effects on character and maturation;
- effects on general perceptions and awareness of oneself;
- effects on the ability to relate interpersonally; and
- effects on awareness, attitudes, and perspectives about cultural and global matters.

Twenty percent of all responses* to a question OREA asked about the impact of the exchanges on personal development dealt directly with character building and maturational issues. The Y.D.P. participants itemized several ways in which they believed they had matured as a result of the participation in the program. The most frequently cited areas for this kind of self-development concerned responsibility, adaptability, independence, self-reliance, patience, and confidence. Over three-fourths (76 percent) of the Y.D.P. participants, in fact, indicated that they

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*Given that each participant could have listed up to four areas of personal development, these figures represent the frequency of the responses, not the percentages of participants who gave the response.

felt an increased sense of self-confidence due to the exchange experience.

Students' responses suggested, moreover, that they seemed to have made distinct personal gains that they made just from undertaking the challenge to look after themselves during the travel and to look out for another during the hosting. A considerable number of the participants' comments emphasized feeling positive about being able to be on one's own, care for oneself, and take care of others, as part of the Y.D.P. obligations for the exchanges. One participant noted, "I felt capable of surviving...I was successful at navigating in unfamiliar surroundings...I gained the satisfaction of meeting unexpected challenges." Another wrote, "I became more responsible and unselfish because I realized I had another person to look after."

Not so indistinct from the influence on maturation and character development were the effects that participants believed that the exchanges had on their awareness of themselves. Twenty percent of the responses addressed the participants' heightened or broadened cognizance of their own abilities and limitations, behaviors and potentials, priorities and values, and their general outlook and attitudes toward life. Some participants noted that they felt more aware of the things they "take for granted" while others indicated that they had become aware of more life options for themselves than they had previously known.

The third area of personal gain was in interpersonal

relationships and communication. Sixteen percent of the responses related to the participants' perceptions of their improved social skills; enhanced ability to compromise, get along with, and be tolerant of others; and increased confidence and adeptness in speaking to groups and foreigners, expressing opinions, and listening effectively. Ninety percent of the Y.D.P. participants indicated that, as a result of the Y.D.P. exchange, their ability to communicate with people from other cultures increased. One student was impressed with discovering how he could be "diplomatic in many situations" as a result of the Y.D.P. experience.

The last and most referred to area of personal growth pertained to the participants' sensitivity to and outlook on cultural diversity and international concerns. One-third of all of the participants' comments about personal development focused on the advances they felt they had made in understanding and respecting cultural differences, in acquiring a wider ranging world perspective, and in appreciating the home culture, here within New York City and the United States. When asked directly, over 90 percent of the Y.D.P. participants indicated that their awareness and respect for cultural and language differences had increased as a result of having been in the program. One student wrote, "Different is not always wrong and just because the system [of the exchange country] is not the same, ours is not absolutely better." Another participant wrote, "It [the hosting experience] allowed me to see my own city through a good friend's eyes." And

yet another, "As a result of the program my interest in other cultures has gone from non-existent to the point where I can't wait to be exposed to something different and exciting."

With only a few rare exceptions* the participants believed that the Y.D.P. exchanges had affected their personal development positively and in significant, life-lasting ways. The most striking effects and the ones most often shared related to the broadening of the participants' views and the deepening of their appreciation of human diversity and the expansive scope of the world community. In addition to meeting the Y.D.P. goal of promoting multicultural understanding for most of the participants, the aim to elevate the self-confidence of the participants was widely achieved.

LESSONS ON FRIENDSHIP

A final area where the Y.D.P. impact was prominently felt, was on the development of important friendships for participants. Most of the former participants surveyed indicated that they had made solid and long lasting foreign friends who would continue to teach them about different cultures. Many also learned more general lessons about friendship which, they believed, had influenced their approaches to friendships since the Y.D.P. experience. Of the effects noted, the most common dealt with becoming more appreciative of 1) the value in selecting friends on the basis of inner rather than external qualities; 2) the

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*Less than 3 percent of the Y.D.P. participants indicated that the exchange experience had no impact or negative effects on their personal development.

value in simply knowing different kinds of people; and 3) the satisfactions of trying to maintain lifetime friendships despite obstacles (ie., long distance, interpersonal tensions). While not one the primary objectives of the Y.D.P., a substantial number of the participants responses suggested that the lessons learned about friendship were among the most important effects of the program.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study describes the organization and component activities of the Young Diplomats Program both in New York City and abroad. OREA received survey responses from 211 former Y.D.P. participants, and collected supplementary data from in-depth interviews with the Y.D.P. Project Director and from observations of orientation seminars. The information gathered covered a range of topics. These included the various countries that have cooperated in the exchanges and what these exchanges have consisted of as well as the different kinds of preparation and post-exchange activities and events that the former participants have engaged in. OREA also inquired about the educational backgrounds and post-secondary aims of participants, and some of the academic and occupational choices that participants have actually made that are associated with the Y.D.P. experiences. Finally, data was collected on the participants' perceptions of how the Y.D.P. exchange experiences influenced their personal development and understanding of international matters.

OREA found that from the 1983-84 through the 1988-89 school years, a total of 545 New York City Board of Education high school students participated in the Y.D.P. They represented all five New York City boroughs with the majority (75 percent) coming from Queens, Staten Island, and Manhattan. These students were part of 30 travel exchanges and 27 hosting exchanges, and were complemented by foreign students and staff from approximately 10

countries. The exchanges regularly featured school attendance, historical sightseeing, official receptions and cultural events, and a sampling of everyday life activities through the homestays with foreign families.

Based on the respondents' answers in the surveys, OREA evaluators found that the typical Y.D.P. participant is a highly motivated, college-bound, professionally oriented young person, who generally has direction and plans about his or her future. Over 86 percent of the former participants reported, in fact, that they had been or would be attending a four-year college. In addition, more than 80 percent indicated that their career aspirations were in professional fields. These were not unanticipated findings, given that the Y.D.P. selection criteria explicitly target this type of student.

Concerns have been and continue to be raised, however, over aspects of the selection process. One such concern relates to whether or not a broad enough base of otherwise eligible recruits are being reached during the selection phase. Many students whose high schools do not offer related courses or are thought to be unsuitable for other reasons, are not considered for the program. An examination of the Y.D.P. selection guidelines is warranted to address and resolve these issues. The majority of respondents felt that the orientation sessions prior to the travel exchanges were more useful than those prior to the hosting. The reasons for this difference could not be discerned from the data collected. However, the majority of participants

(90 percent) did indicate that the most helpful features of the seminars were the opportunities to get to know the other New York City students in the group and the talks on travel tips. Many of the students (65 percent) still found other aspects of the seminars helpful, such as the presentations about the culture of the partner country. Additionally, close to 60 percent of the participants indicated that, on their own, they spoke to teachers, read books and magazines, and/or made contact with former Y.D.P. participants from their schools to prepare for the exchanges.

Based on these findings, it appears that the Y.D.P participants are provided with and utilize well a multiplicity of resources to prepare for the international exchanges. Moreover, their responses suggest that they were more interested in getting to meet and know who they would be with on the exchanges and what to expect in terms of the kinds of experiences they would have, than they were in getting specific information about the partner country.

Generally speaking, the efforts to coordinate activities after the exchanges for the Y.D.P. participants have been weaker than those before the exchanges. While there are unified activities for participants, which are planned by the Y.D.P. prior to the exchanges, there are no comparable ones after the exchanges. Rather, post-exchange activities are designed and carried out for participants in their respective schools. OREA found that the opportunities to make presentations or to be

involved in other meaningful follow-up events at the schools were uneven. Not all Y.D.P. participants surveyed, for example, had made school presentations; when they had, it was more often after a travel rather than a hosting exchange. Specific guidelines on what is supposed to take place at the school, after the exchanges were not clarified. A closer look at the Y.D.P. follow-up component is advised in order to point to ways to improve the existing one or develop alternatives to it. These might include, for example, strengthening the role of either or both the Y.D.P. school coordinator or the Y.D.P. project staff in the planning or monitoring of the follow-up activities. In the meantime, however, the majority of participants have been carrying out their own form of follow-up by keeping in touch with the friends made abroad.

The high value placed on getting to meet new people and make new friends resonated throughout the responses of the former participants. Indeed, the great majority of the participants (over 90 percent) indicated that the main reason they were initially drawn to the Y.D.P. was to meet and know students from different countries. To attest to the fact that the Y.D.P. experiences have met that expectation, nearly all participants (approximately 90 percent) reported that they are continuing to maintain some sort of contact with their foreign partner. While letter writing back and forth has been the most popular form of contact, a remarkable number of former participants (up to 25 percent) have managed to visit with their foreign friends since

the Y.D.P. exchanges. Equally impressive, many of former participants noted that they have or plan to return to the exchange country to study abroad at the college level.

Regarding the impact of the Y.D.P. experiences on post-secondary decisions and choices, OREA found that a majority of the former participants (60 percent), felt that the Y.D.P. experiences guided some aspect of their decision-making about college. The most widespread effect, for close to one-third of the participants, was on motivating them to undertake courses of study in areas related to the exchanges. One-sixth of the former participants, in fact, identified their college majors as being in international fields. Another important decision influenced by the Y.D.P. experience concerned college selection (which one to attend and where). In a few notable instances, some former participants credited the Y.D.P. experience for encouraging them to go to college at all.

OREA found similar results with regard to the impact of the Y.D.P. experiences on the career choices that participants either have made or continue to consider. Between 40 and 60 percent of the former Y.D.P. participants indicated that the exchange experience influenced them to aim for occupations that have an international market or an international focus, offer opportunities to travel abroad, or require use of a foreign language. Suggestive of the possibility for longer range impact, nearly one-fifth of the Y.D.P. participants reported that their future aspirations include internationally based occupations.

Perhaps the most deeply felt effects of the Y.D.P. exchange experiences and certainly the most difficult to pinpoint, were on the participants' personal development and world outlook. Over three-fourths of the participants indicated that they experienced an increase in self-confidence as a result of the Y.D.P. experience. The participants' responses suggested, further, that the positive feelings about oneself, brought on or bolstered by the Y.D.P. experience, were carried over into improved interpersonal relations and skills. Most outstanding were the participants' reports on how their attitudes about the world had broadened and sensitivity to cultural differences, deepened. Over 90 percent of the participants felt that their respect for cultural and language differences had increased as result of the Y.D.P. experience. Additionally many of the participants felt that they had transferred these changes in outlook over into their friendship and citizenship practices.

Based on these findings, OREA offers the following recommendations:

- The Y.D.P. should examine and reevaluate the selection process and criteria in order to determine strategies for opening up recruitment to a broader base of eligible students.

- The follow-up component of the Y.D.P. exchanges should be fully reassessed in order to strengthen the activities and ensure consistency in their implementation from school to school. This should include a review of the roles of the Y.D.P. project staff and the Y.D.P. school coordinator in the planning and monitoring of post-exchange activities.

APPENDIX

COLLEGE MAJOR AREAS AND CAREER TYPES

International Fields:	foreign language, global history, international relations, international business, travel/tourism, international law, foreign service, translator
Civics (Studies):	history, criminal justice, law, economics, political science, government service, public office, urban planning
Social Sciences:	anthropology, sociology, psychology, race and ethnic studies
Health Professions:	medicine, health sciences, dentistry
Business/Computer Sciences:	computer programming, data management, accounting, finance, retail, marketing, personnel
Media (Studies):	communications, journalism, film/video, writer, news/radio
Natural/Physical Sciences:	scientist, astronomy, geology
Arts/Music/Design:	fine arts, theatre arts, architecture, museum arts, crafts maker, entertainment industry, performing arts
Engineering/Math:	statistics, math, aviation science, engineer
Humanities:	religion, philosophy, English, clergy
Education:	teaching